

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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August 8, 2006

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

SUBJECT: COUNTYWIDE FOOD STAMP OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

In July 2005, in response to your Board's direction, DPSS implemented a collaborative Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Campaign. This memo is to provide you with an update on the Campaign, and our Department's ongoing efforts to reduce food insecurity and hunger by increasing Food Stamp participation in Los Angeles County.

As of June 2006, the successful progress of this Countywide plan has resulted in 93,868 applications, a 14.06% increase in the Food Stamp Only caseload, compared to the Countywide average of 82,295 applications for the period of October 2004 through September 2005. This plan includes the following elements:

- One Intake Eligibility Worker (EW) in each DPSS Food Stamp district office continues to be dedicated to outreach efforts. This Outreach EW accepts and assists with Food Stamp applications at non-traditional sites, such as health clinics, food pantries, Farmer's Markets, churches and schools. We are also expanding the use of soup kitchens as outreach sites. Additionally, the Outreach EW makes program presentations, distributes marketing materials and conducts pre-screening events.
- DPSS continues to outstation Food Stamp Intake EWs at 11 Department of Community and Senior Services (CSS) emergency food distribution sites, including Senior Centers. Outreach EWs continue to perform outreach and accept applications at these sites.
- In February 2006, our Department implemented a collaborative pilot, outstationing Food Stamp Intake EWs at four CSS WorkSource Centers. Efforts at these sites include making presentations, performing outreach and accepting applications for both Food Stamps and Medi-Cal.
- Effective June 1, 2006, DPSS partnered with the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles, to provide Food Stamp outreach materials to their visitors. We are also exploring the feasibility of the Consulate providing Food Stamp applications at their site to legal immigrants who may be potentially eligible to food stamps.

- Our Department completed a successful six-month pilot on December 30, 2005, to test the effectiveness of joint Medi-Cal/Food Stamp outreach workers. The pilot included the testing of two models. One used five Outreach EWs from a traditional district office. The other used five Outreach EWs from a Medi-Cal Outreach District. These EWs performed outreach and assisted and accepted Food Stamp and Medi-Cal applications at non-traditional sites. They also provided valuable information about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). To achieve the goal of increasing participation, this outreach pilot:
 - Promoted positive perceptions about the Medi-Cal and Food Stamp Programs;
 - Identified and took action to remove existing barriers;
 - Improved access by using more creative ways to begin the application process;
 - Enhanced outreach activities;
 - Increased knowledge of the EITC by low-income households; and
 - Enhanced existing partnerships with community-based organizations and other agencies, and actively engaged new community partners.

Due to the success of this pilot, we are developing procedures to expand and continue with this effort on an ongoing basis.

- Food Stamp outreach continues to be conducted with families and individuals receiving Medi-Cal, who do not receive Food Stamp benefits. During the yearly review for ongoing Medi-Cal cases, EWs are sending Food Stamp applications to potentially eligible households. Similarly, families and individuals applying for Medi-Cal continue to be encouraged to apply for Food Stamp benefits. Additionally, "Ask Me About Food Stamps" buttons have been provided to District Medi-Cal eligibility staff to supplement outreach efforts.
- DPSS continues to develop relationships with School Districts to enhance our Food Stamp Outreach efforts. On July 1, 2006, on a pilot basis, Covina School District began including Food Stamp outreach flyers in each Free School Lunch Program mail packet, with information on how to apply for benefits. Inquiries will be tracked by our Health and Nutrition Hotline to assess the effectiveness of this effort.
- Our Department's Restaurant Meals Program continues to assist homeless, elderly and disabled Food Stamp participants in purchasing prepared meals at restaurants authorized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). As of June 22, 2006, DPSS has signed MOUs with 242 restaurants. Of these, 150 are operational, 41 are approved by USDA but not yet operational, and 51 are currently in the USDA authorization process.

- To maximize the effectiveness of this campaign, we contracted with a social marketing expert, funded by the Quality and Productivity Commission, to develop a media strategy and marketing materials that reach our target population. The materials were developed by this expert and are targeted for delivery to District outreach staff by the end of August 2006.

We are also preparing to implement a Food Stamp Advertising Campaign that will maximize the effectiveness of the Outreach Campaign, and to dispel myths and misconceptions by clarifying Food Stamp eligibility rules. The Advertising Campaign will also promote the implementation of the Community-Based (CBO) and Faith-Based Organization (FBO) Food Stamp Application Assistance Project. The CBO/FBO Assistance Project involves contracting with CBOs and FBOs with the goal of assisting potentially eligible Food Stamp applicants in completing the application and providing it, with required supporting documentation, to DPSS. Both projects are targeted for implementation in November of 2006.

Increasing Food Stamp participation among eligible households continues to be a priority for DPSS, in partnership with a wide variety of community partners. I will continue to report to you on the progress of our Food Stamp Outreach efforts on a semi-annual basis.

BY:ms

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors